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- [Main page](#)
[Contents](#)
[Current events](#)
[Random article](#)
[About Wikipedia](#)
[Contact us](#)
[Donate](#)

Contribute

- [Help](#)
- [Learn to edit](#)
- [Community portal](#)
- [Recent changes](#)
- [Upload file](#)

Tools

- What links here
- Related changes
- Special pages
- Permanent link
- Page information
- Cite this page
- Wikidata item

Print/export

- [Download as PDF](#)
[Printable version](#)

In other projects

Wikisource

Languages

Français

Русский

 Edit links

Richard Rawlinson

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Richard Rawlinson *FRS* (3 January 1690 – 6 April 1755) was an [English](#) clergyman and [antiquarian](#) collector of books and manuscripts, which he bequeathed to the [Bodleian Library, Oxford](#).^[1]

Contents [\[hide\]](#)

- 1 [Life](#)
- 2 [Notes](#)
- 3 [References](#)
- 4 [Further reading](#)
- 5 [External links](#)

Life [\[edit source \]](#)

Richard Rawlinson was a younger son of [Sir Thomas Rawlinson](#) (1647–1708), [Lord Mayor of the City of London](#) in 1705–6, and a brother of [Thomas Rawlinson](#) (1681–1725), the bibliophile who ruined himself in the [South Sea Company](#), at whose sale in 1734 Richard bought many of the [Orientalia](#). He was educated at [St Paul's School](#), at [Eton College](#), and at [St John's College, Oxford](#). In 1714, he was elected a [Fellow of the Royal Society](#), where he was inducted by [Newton](#). Rawlinson was a [Jacobite](#) and maintained a strong support for the exiled Stuart Royal family throughout his life. In 1716 he was ordained as a Deacon and then priest in the nonjuring Church of England (see [Nonjuring schism](#)), the ceremony being performed by the bishop, [Jeremy Collier](#). Rawlinson was, in 1728, consecrated as a Bishop in the nonjuring church by Bishops Gandy, Black and Blackbourne's death in 1741 he became the senior nonjuring Bishop in London and still maintained a congregation into the 1760s. He was concerned with collecting the history and archives of the nonjurors, but later squabbled with his fellow bishops in continuing the work of Robert Gordon.

Rawlinson travelled in [England](#) and on the continent of [Europe](#), where he passed several years, making very diverse collections of books, manuscripts, pictures and curiosities ^[2] of manuscripts, coins and curiosities, his books alone forming three libraries, English, foreign and Classical.


Rawlinson was a friend of the antiquarian [Thomas Hearne](#) and, among his voluminous writings, published a *Life* of the antiquary [Anthony Wood](#).

Towards the end of his life, Rawlinson quarrelled with both the Royal Society and the [Society of Antiquaries](#).^[3] Cutting the Society of Antiquaries from his bequests, he began transferring his collections to the Bodleian. Among his collection was a copperplate known as the [Bodleian Plate](#) depicting structures in [Williamsburg, Virginia](#). A series of almanacs in 175 volumes, ranging in date from 1607 to 1747 arrived in 1752–55. At his death, Rawlinson left to the Library 5,205 manuscripts bound in volumes that include many rare broadsides and other printed [ephemera](#), his curiosities, and some other property that endowed a professorship of [Anglo-Saxon](#) at [Oxford University](#). The [Rawlinsonian Professor of Anglo-Saxon](#) was first appointed in 1795. He was also a benefactor to [St John's College, Oxford](#).

He died at [Islington](#), London.

Richard Rawlinson is buried at St John's College, Oxford, allegedly holding the skull of Christopher Layer, an executed Jacobite. . [Rawlinson Road](#) in [North Oxford](#) is named after him.^[4]

Notes [\[edit source \]](#)

- ¹ [^] [Lee, Sidney](#), ed. (1896). "[Rawlinson, Richard](#)"  [. Dictionary of National Biography](#). **47**. London: Smith, Elder & Co. pp. 331–333.
- ² [^] "His collections in the Bodleian Library defeat the most persistent attempts at analysis" Brian J. Enright wrote in his introductory remarks to Tashjian and Enright 1991.
- ³ [^] He stipulated in his will that no F.R.S. or F.R.A.—nor Irishman nor Scot nor native of the colonies—should hold the chair he endowed, a direction that was ignored. (Tashjian and Enright 1991).
- ⁴ [^] Symonds, Ann Spokes (1997). "Buildings and Gardens". *The Changing Faces of North Oxford*. Book One. [Robert Boyd Publications](#). p. 13. [ISBN 1-899536-25-6](#).

References [[edit source](#)]

- This article incorporates text from a publication now in the [public domain](#): Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). "Rawlinson, Richard". *Encyclopædia Britannica*. **22** (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press. p. 929.
- [Rawlinson Manuscripts](#) , [Bodleian Library](#), Oxford, UK.

Further reading [[edit source](#)]

- Georgian R. Tashjian, David R. Tashjian, and Brian J. Enright (1991), *Richard Rawlinson: A Tercentenary Memorial* (Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo Medieval Institute Publications). [ISBN 0-932826-23-7](#).

External links [[edit source](#)]

- [Richard Rawlinson](#) at [Find a Grave](#)
- [Works by or about Richard Rawlinson](#) in libraries ([WorldCat](#) catalog)

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